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C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000165

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SUBJECT: EDUCATING THE LIBYANS; FNDD OUTLINES FIRST STEPS
IN LIBYAN MEDIATION EFFORT

REF: A. A. NOUAKCHOTT 161

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[1](#)C. C. NOUAKCHOTT 157

Classified By: CDA Cornelius C. Walsh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: National Front for the Defense of Democracy (FNDD) Director of External Relations, Mohamed Ould Maouloud, met with Charge, Thursday, February 26, to outline policies regarding the mediation efforts of African Union President Qadhafi, relationships within the Mauritanian opposition, and to thank the US for its continuing support and quick response to the FNDD's request for a USG statement following the Paris Contact Group meeting. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) The Libyans. As noted in reftels, initial Libyan efforts to mediate were not successful due to the Libyans failure to do their homework, as some Mauritians put it. However, the second phase of the effort has not gone much better. The FNDD suspects it is a combination of Libyan ignorance and a desire to bull their way to an agreement to AU President Qadhafi's (and perhaps Junta leader Abdel Aziz') liking. Maouloud outlined three issues that have gotten the Libyans off to an unfortunate start:

- i. Formal reception by AU president Qadhafi of Junta leader Aziz in Tripoli
- ii. Libyan acceptance of the credentials of the Junta's Ambassador to Tripoli
- iii. Libyan attempts to limit the mediation effort to Aziz, President Abdahllahi, and Rally for Democracy's (RFD), President Ould Dahdah
- iv. Failure by the Libyans to initiate contact with President Abdahllahi and other parties until after initial discussions with Junta leader Aziz.

[1](#)3. (C) Mauritanian Reaction: As bruited in the Junta's official media, Aziz and colleagues are delighted with the Libyan effort. As noted by the speed with which RFD President Ould Dahdah responded to the Libyan invitation to Tripoli, the RFD obviously sees something in the effort for Ould Dahdah and, concurrently, a means to undercut the legitimate president. The FNDD, the Presidential camp, and other bystanders are not as enthused.

[1](#)4. (C) A Libyan invitation to participate was extended to President Abdahllahi and President of the National Assembly and opposition representative, Messaoud Ould Boulkheir. President Abdahllahi granted Boulkheir authority to speak on his behalf. Boulkheir explained to the Libyans that the mediation effort and any further "national dialogue" would have to go beyond the three players on whom the Libyans were

focused. The FNDD, while strongly supporting the President and a return to constitutional order, was a coalition of 14 political parties and would have to be represented as an independent entity. The Parliament, in which the FNDD and other opposition groups had considerable support should be represented in its own right. Parties not of the FNDD with limited or no parliamentary representation should also be recognized.

¶15. (C) This resulted in a hurried Libyan invitation to Maouloud to confer with the Libyans, Wednesday afternoon. "We'll send a plane this evening." was the Libyan invitation. Maouloud explained to the Libyans that the FNDD was a disparate coalition and that he as External Affairs Commissioner would have to confer with his constituency.

¶16. (C) Next steps. The FNDD was to have met Thursday afternoon and evening to outline the platform it would take in preparing for the discussions with the Libyans. It was also developing a formal statement outlining its difficulties with the results of the Paris February 20 Contact Group meeting (draft copy obtained by USAU Addis and forwarded to Nouakchott, Paris, and AF) that would be ratified at the same time. On Friday, the FNDD, other opposition groups, and parliamentary representatives would meet with President Abdahllahi in Lemden to develop a generally united platform for further discussions with the Libyans. Once all have conferred, Maouloud believed a mixed delegation would be prepared to travel to Tripoli on Sunday, march 1st.

¶17. (C) Bottom lines. Maouloud outlined the FNDD's current posture with the Libyans:

- i. No mediatory efforts while President Abdahllahi still restricted to Lemden while former Prime Minister Wagdhef and others still i prison, and members of the opposition subject to constant regulatory harassment by Junta bureaucrats.
- ii. Recognition of Libyan mediation efforts only and only if they are under the auspices of Libyan president Qadhafi's role as president of the African Union. No CEN-SAD, No Maghrebian, no Arab aegis. This is an African Union issue and other groupings or ideologies are not helpful.

¶18. (C) Even with these issues clearly delineated, Maouloud noted that the Sunday meetings with the Libyans are simply to outline the opposition positions, discuss possible modalities and venues for further discussions, and continue to educate the Libyan side regarding the dynamics of the Mauritanian crisis.

¶19. (C) American Role: Maouloud thanked Charge for quick USG reaction to FNDD President Abeidna's request for a statement in the wake of the Paris meeting. The Monday statement had focused the Europeans once more on targeted sanctions, forced the HCE to realize that the Paris meeting was not an unalloyed victory for their camp, and encouraged President Abdahllahi to press on.

¶10. (C) COMMENT: The FNDD and other political leaders we have spoken to, even some supportive of the HCE, view the Libyan effort with unbounded cynicism. The general feeling is that Qadhafi wants a solution that preserves Aziz' powers, if not as head of state, then as eminence grise with the military's backing. Few believe that the proposed June 6 elections can be free, fair, or transparent, but then, no one believes that this would be a problem for Qadhafi. The Libyan difficulties in understanding the various constituencies and issues swirling about in the Mauritanian process simply don't bode well for a successful effort. Sunday's encounters should be interesting. END COMMENT

WALSH